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The War to End War

A Plea to Soldiers
:: by a Soldier ::

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The Union of Democratic Control.

NOTE.

The following pamphlet is published by the Union of Democratic Control, because it is a valuable contribution to the discussion of the causes of war and means of its avoidance in future. The object of the Union in its pamphlets is to place at the disposal of the public ideas and information which may create a healthy and informed opinion. But it does not necessarily adopt as its own every statement or opinion therein contained. The five cardinal points are the only principles to which the members of the Union are collectively pledged.

The five cardinal points in the policy of the Union of Democratic Control are as follows:—

To formulate, and organise support for, such a policy as shall lead to the establishment and maintenance of an enduring peace. For this purpose, to advocate the following points, and to take any other action which the Council of the Union of Democratic Control may, from time to time, declare to be in furtherance of such policy.

1. No Province shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent, by plebiscite or otherwise, of the population of such province.

2. No Treaty, Arrangement, or Undertaking shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the sanction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.

3. The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the Balance of Power, but shall be directed to concerted action between the Powers, and the setting up of an International Council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public, with such machinery for securing international agreement as shall be the guarantee of an abiding peace.

4. Great Britain shall propose as part of the Peace settlement a plan for the drastic reduction, by consent, of the armaments of all the belligerent Powers, and to facilitate that policy shall attempt to secure the general nationalisation of the manufacture of armaments, and the control of the export of armaments by one country to another.

5.—The European conflict shall not be continued by economic war after the military operations have ceased. British policy shall be directed towards promoting free commercial intercourse between all nations and the preservation and extension of the principle of the open door.

"The Union of Democratic Control, convinced that democracy must be based on the equal citizenship of men and women, invites the co-operation of women."
(Resolution of the General Council of the Union, February 9th, 1915.)

THE WAR TO END WAR.

A Plea to Soldiers by a Soldier.

INTRODUCTORY.

The argument which I am setting forth in this paper is no new one. I hasten at once to disclaim all intention of advocating any original views of my own; for, were I to attempt to do so, I should be guilty of wronging those who are my guides and have been the source of my opinions. For nearly three years now certain men and women have been willing to endure the vilest misrepresentation and to meet the most public persecution which our time has known. Because they are content to sacrifice individual aspirations to what they honestly believe to be the interest of our country and of the world at large, public opinion—as represented by the Press—has conducted a bitter campaign against them, reviling them by a multitude of names, of which "traitor," "coward" and "pro-German" have been among the less offensive. To these advocates of an unpopular cause I give all credit, and to them, too—far more capable than I—would I gladly leave the publication of their views. But it has been their unfortunate lot that their very courage has militated against their success.[1] Without being allowed that fair-play on which we, as Englishmen, are wont to congratulate ourselves, they were from the start of the war given that bad name which, as the old proverb tells us, inevitably sticks. I do not labour under that disadvantage. My position, humble as it is, frees me from the charge of pro-Germanism. I can only be accused of being the victim of delusions; and before I am convicted I ask my fellow soldiers, by giving me a fair hearing, to learn what those "delusions" are. With this object I add another to the vast list of articles inspired by the war; and on these grounds I ask any who may be inclined to object, to excuse my lack of modesty in describing myself as a "soldier."

. . . . . .

OUR OUTLOOK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

You and I probably lived through July and August, 1914, with much the same outlook. With a rapidity which surprised most of us, Great Britain, in common with other Powers of

(1) The last word has, perhaps, not yet been spoken.—THE EDITORS.

Europe, changed from a country divided into two or more parties by a dozen important questions into a nation united in its resolve for war. We had for so long been accustomed to party faction that the realisation of unity between Government and Opposition threw us entirely off our guard. Nor was any restraining voice heard bidding us ponder a while before committing ourselves; for the numerically small anti-war party, not through lack of courage but owing to suppression and perversion of the truth, was unable to secure itself the attention of the nation. One and all we read the newspapers and were convinced that Germany and Austria had deliberately forced war upon Europe; that in doing so they had violated not only the laws of morality and justice but also certain obligations binding on England; that the existence of our sworn friends in Europe was at stake; that our own interests were bound to be endangered; in short, that we, too, must fight. If we hesitated at all, as many of us undoubtedly did, Blue-books and White-books proved clearly that Germany was the aggressor; while we found an inspiring moral war-cry in the phrase: "We are fighting a war to end war." So I felt then, and I still believe now, that, owing to the international position, England had no choice but to fight. The reasons for fighting which I have enumerated certainly existed; while above all I believed that in truth we were entering a struggle to end war. It is partly because reflection has led me (and I know many another soldier of England) to study history and to analyse the conditions existing in Europe which made such causes for war possible, and partly with a view to the establishment of a lasting peace, that I propose to examine those causes in further detail.

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.

Had I been asked in the early days why I applauded England's decision to fight I should have answered:—

(i.) Austria's precipitate ultimatum to Serbia, supported by Germany, contained conditions impossible to be accepted. Serbia's existence was at stake, and Great Britain professes to be the champion of the liberty of small nations.

(ii.) The neutrality of Belgium, guaranteed by Great Britain, was violated by Germany.

(iii.) England was bound by certain treaty obligations to support France.

(iv.) If Germany succeeded in crushing France, she would next attack Britain.

While I should have added:—

(v.) I consider that Great Britain's honour and interests are at stake. When my country needs men for a cause in which I believe, I feel it my duty to fight for her.

Now, I do not propose to examine the justice of these causes individually. It is not my purpose here to discuss whether obligations entered into by a Government, without the nation being privy to such obligations, are binding on the nation. I do not now propose to enter into fruitless discussion as to whether by an alternative action Sir Edward Grey could have saved Europe even at the eleventh hour. Nor am I prepared to vindicate the statements that England's interests were involved, and that it was, therefore, my duty to fight for her. Instead I wish to group all my reasons together, and, by considering them as effects rather than as causes, to go back farther, and to try to understand the circumstances which were at the root of the whole matter. I wish to be the Chairman of a Railways Accident Enquiry Board, who does not merely report that the accident occurred because someone altered the points, but who also carefully examines the system of a train service in which such an action was possible.

UNDERLYING CAUSES.

What lies behind these reasons? We are fond of answering the "German militaristic spirit" or more correctly the "Prussian militaristic spirit." If we are asked to explain what we mean thereby we reply that the Prussians, led on by an autocratic governing body, believed that it was their destiny to control by conquest the states of Europe and the trade of the world. We point for proof to the huge armaments which Germany had long been constructing, and the numerous small facts, which have since come to light, illustrating the completeness of their diplomatic and military preparations. But England and France had also been engaged in the furious race for supremacy of armament; and it is easy to show that small details of diplomatic and military action had been arranged also by the Entente Powers—with equal certainty, though, perhaps, with less thoroughness. To justify this we assert that the preparations of England and her allies were defensive, and that our armaments were designed to meet those of Germany, which were a danger to Europe. When the German spokesmen declare that it was England and France who theatened the peace of Europe, we seem to be approaching the attitude of two children arguing who hit the other first!

THE PRUSSIAN ATTITUDE.

If, however, we pursue the struggle which has menaced the tranquillity of Europe to a stage a few years further back, we can find something rather more tangible to work upon. The idea of pan-Germanism is of comparatively modern growth. We can ascribe its origin with surprising exactness to Prince Bismarck, and to the powerful body of advisers, military and civil, who sur-

rounded the throne of Emperor William I. We can see how these few men, in whose hands lay the external policy of a new state, infused an ignorant people with their ambitions; how, as the pioneers passed away, the spirit of militarism was carefully nurtured by a succession of politicians, diplomats and soldiers, in whom the Bismarckian tradition was firmly established; how they devoted all the influence which an autocratic body possesses to the one end, letting no incident pass without turning it to account. Some they convinced by the theory that it was Germany's destiny to be supreme in Europe—that they were a people whose spirit was so far superior to that of their neighbours that their ascendency was inevitable, citing as a proof their highly-organised system of internal government, and the marvellous growth of their trade, built up by continual industry and far-seeing enterprises. Others, who were unconvinced by this doctrine, they enlisted on their side by an unfailing appeal. They urged that they had no outlets for their vast trade; no room for the expansion of their rapidly increasing population, compared to the thinly-populated tracts which are at the disposal of the nations which arrived at an earlier date in the colonial field. They declared that other Powers of Europe were standing in their way, and were actively hindering their social and economic progress.

GERMAN ACCUSATIONS.

In answer to this charge, I think that Great Britain can honestly say that while it was impossible—in fact, inconceivable—for her to transfer any part of her Empire to another European Power, she was doing all that she could in fairness to her colonies to give all comers equal rights of settlement and trade throughout her dominions. But even if we dismiss as unjustifiable the German complaint that her late arrival as a coloniser had handicapped her, yet we must seriously consider the latter part of the charge which she brings against her neighbours, for it was by this battle-cry that the Prussian Militarists enlisted the sympathy of that highly intelligent and splendidly idealistic body the German Socialist Party. This is the question which we ought seriously to ask ourselves: Have other European nations, and particularly England, endeavoured to stop German enterprise in those few parts of the world still available for colonisation and "Germanisation"? England has all the Empire that she can want, France has more than is adequate for her decreasing population, Russia needs no more land for her subjects. If, as we must, we admit the need for territory of crowded Germany and the legitimacy of her search for a field for economic enterprise; if, thinking of our own pride in our Empire, we sympathise with the German desire for a colony of her own (just as a woman may hunger for a child to be born to her), in which her emigrants have not to be subject to language and

laws—fair and just enough, perhaps, yet none the less alien—then, I say, we cannot deny Germany's right to expand in districts where there is still opportunity for an advanced state to exercise the privileges of motherhood. Let us look at facts, and discover whether we have followed this principle of whether the Prussian charge has any foundation.

THE EVIDENCE—

(1) MOROCCO.

The first case which occurs to me is Morocco. It is in the main unprofitable to rake up incidents which are over, but here we have one from which, owing to its being well within the memory of even the youngest among us, and withal damningly convincing, we can learn much which should be of use to us in the future. Here very briefly are the facts in chronological order[1]:—

1875-1900.—Realisation of the importance of Morocco to Great Britain, France, Spain and Germany. (To Britain as containing a strategic counter-point to Gibraltar. To France owing to the French imperialistic dream of a North African Empire. To Spain from reasons of sentiment. To Germany as an economic outlet for her industrial enterprise.)

1880.—Conference of Powers at Madrid over Morocco. Equal commercial treatment to all comers affirmed.

1880-1900.—Growth of French imperialistic ambition and development of German trade interests in Morocco.

1901-2.—Secret negotiations between Italy, France and Spain.

Italy, in return for the promise of being allowed a free hand in Tripoli, agrees to the Franco-Spanish partition of Morocco. Great Britain hears of negotiations, and at her instigation Spain withholds her assent.

1904.—Franco-British agreement. Published arrangement: France undertakes not to interfere with British activity in Egypt, and in return Great Britain agrees to "recognise France's special interests in Morocco."

1904.—Franco-Spanish declaration. Published Clause: France and Spain "firmly attached" to the integrity and independence of Morocco. Secret clauses in agreement and declaration: France and Spain to divide Morocco, and share the economic spoils. Great Britain, from strategic motives, stipulates that Spain, not France, shall control the Mediterranean coastline. These secret clauses were concealed from Germany, and from the Parliaments

[1] See "Morocco in Diplomacy" or "Truth and the War" (Chapter IX.). Both by E. D. Morel.

and Peoples of Britain, France, and Spain. Germany grows suspicious. At the Kaiser's instigation, the Sultan of Morocco suggests a further international conference upon European connection with the affairs of his country. Germany advocates such a conference on the ground that the future of Morocco is an international matter, and not a Franco-British matter. Great Britain and France unwillingly consent.

1906.—Algeciras Conference, signed by Great Britain, France, Spain and Germany, reaffirms the integrity and independence of the Sultan of Morocco. Secretly: Great Britain is committed by the Foreign Office to supporting the ambitions of France—i.e., a potential French Protectorate over Morocco.

1906-1911.—Ignoring the Algeciras Act, France proceeds to absorb Morocco, amidst the applause of the officially-inspired British Press, and with the open approval of the British Foreign Office. Germany endeavours to prevent a rupture by trying to obtain concessions elsewhere. This is refused by France. The German Imperialists criticise the Government for their diplomatic failure, and urge bellicose action.

1911.—The French occupy Fez, and remain there. German patience becomes exhausted; and the gunboat "Panther" is sent to Agadir to intimate that Germany must take part in the settlement of Morocco. France is now in military occupation of a considerable part of the country, while Spain takes possession of the portion secretly allotted to her. (Final disappearance of the Algeciras Act). The British Secretary for Foreign Affairs sees in the German action "a menace to British interests." Franco-German negotiations follow, in which Great Britain insists on taking part.

July 21, 1911.—The Secretary for Foreign Affairs hints that it may be necessary to protect British interests by force, and denounces certain German "demands." Extreme diplomatic tension results; war is only averted by the pacific elements in the three countries.

November, 1911.—Germany recognises a French protectorate over Morocco, only stipulating that the door be left open to all countries for trade and investments. The whole intrigue is subsequently revealed in the French Chamber. It transpires that the Governments of France and Germany had negotiated before the French march on Fez. Germany had then consented to recognise the French protectorate over Morocco, provided that she received compensation elsewhere exactly as had been granted to Great Britain, Italy and Spain. These were the "demands" (referred to above) denounced by the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Net Result.—France and Britain had treated the Algeciras Act as "a scrap of paper." The French jingoes were enormously

strengthened, and the German Imperialists became incensed with France and Great Britain. German Socialists were convinced that their country was the victim of a hostile conspiracy. Increased tension between Germany and the Anglo-French Entente.

(2) THE EASTERN QUESTION.

So much for Morocco. Let us now turn to those regions of Asia in which the question recurred of selfish European interference with Germany's desire for expansion. We can here honestly congratulate ourselves that, when the war broke out, the policy of Great Britain was to some extent being directed along the path of fairness and far-seeing statesmanship, despite the violent protests of the Imperialists. A chronological table is difficult in this case, but a rapid survey may help to disclose the justice of Germany's charge against some of the elements in the Entente countries, and to indicate the lines which a high-principled policy should pursue after the war.[1]

One of the most important factors in the international politics of recent years has been the German hope of a "Berlin to Bagdad" Railway. German ambition has long been directed towards Turkey, primarily by Von Moltke, and since his day by a succession of strategists and economists. The Turkish dominions, so badly governed and so loudly crying for reform that the most ardent British Imperialist will surely acknowledge that even German control would be a change for the better, form the largest of the very few parts of the globe still open for development by an enlightened Power. Even here, however, Germany found abundant traces of British influence, which remained predominant until the British occupation of Egypt and our consequent anti-Turkish policy. Method and industry rapidly gave to the Germans the most influential position at Constantinople. By contracts, concessions and loans, and particularly by the sale of armaments, they made headway; nor can we forget how large a part was played by the Prussianisation of the Ottoman Army—which was thoroughly acceptable to the Turks themselves. In 1873 German financiers started the Anatolian Railway, which gradually reached Konia. In 1899 and 1902 concessions were obtained, with the goodwill of the Turkish Government, for an extension to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf. Here I quote from Mr. Lowes Dickinson:—

> "Here had been launched on a grandiose scale a great enterprise of civilisation. The Mesopotamian plain, the cradle of civilisation, and for centuries the granary of the world, was to be redeemed by irrigation from the encroachment of the desert, order and security were to be restored, labour to be set

[1] See "European Anarchy," by G. Lowes Dickinson, and "Turkey and the Roads to the East," by H. N. Brailsford.

at work, and science and power to be devoted on a great scale to their only proper purpose, the increase of life. Here was an idea fit to inspire the most generous imagination. Here, for all the idealism of youth and the ambition of maturity, for diplomatists, engineers, administrators, agriculturists, educationists, an opportunity for the work of a lifetime, a task to appeal at once to the imagination, the intellect, and the organising capacity of practical men, a scheme in which all nations might be proud to participate, and by which Europe might show to the backward populations that the power she had won over nature was to be used for the benefit of man, and that the science and the arms of the West were destined to recreate the life of the East."[1]

While Mr. H. N. Brailsford says:—

"From the Turkish point of view this railway was an administrative and military necessity. Railway builders who considered only the needs of trade would not have been attracted by it. The denser population in Turkey is to be found clustered in limited areas near the coast . . . . . The natural course was to drive short railways (of which there are still too few) up from the ports, so as gradually to develop the roadless interior. But for the purposes of Government, police, and military concentration, it was precisely through the sparsely-peopled, half-tilled, and inaccessible interior that the Porte most wished to drive a road. Only by this means could the primitive anarchy of some provinces be brought to order. . . . . Commercially, the Bagdad Railway is unlikely to be profitable for many years, or even decades. . . . . From an economic standpoint the best that can be said for it is that it will gradually concentrate population along its own course, and bring cultivation to the waste places. This has happened already in the plain of Konia. There was everything to be said for such a railway from the Turkish standpoint, but much less from that of the foreign trader."[2]

Unfortunately, Germany now came into collision with the interests of the Powers of Europe. She approached them for financial and political aid, only to meet jealousy and instant hostility. A guarantee of maintaining the policy of the "open door" did nothing to assuage the antagonism of the Conservative and Imperialistic elements of France, Britain, and Russia. The vested interests of these three countries (so potent a factor in international politics under the present system) feared for their trade—as though established interests should always be a bar to enterprise and de-

[1] G. Lowes Dickinson, "The European Anarchy." P. 100.
[2] H. N. Brailsford, "Turkey and the Roads to the East." P. 13.

velopment! Russia saw in the Germanisation of Turkey a menace to her own ambitions regarding the gates of the Black Sea. Similarly a cry was raised in England that Germany was preparing for a strategic advance on Egypt, Persia, and India; though it is difficult to see what she hoped to gain thereby, having already in prospect the development of a vast area in Asia, or how she hoped to attain such an object with Russia, the ally of Britain, menacing her communications. For a time tension, fostered by trade interests and the Press campaign, existed between the Powers concerned. Friendly co-operation failed; but after the crisis had somewhat abated, German perseverance engineered agreements with Russia (1911), France (1914), and England (1914), so that just prior to the outbreak of the war saner and more liberal policies defeated the unjustifiable and dangerous intentions of jingoes and militarists.

The result, then, of this series of incidents was that after a long period of friction and difficulty, owing to the selfishness of the aggressive and interested elements in the Triple Entente, Germany was enabled to carry out a scheme of development beneficial to herself, to Turkey, and to civilisation, upon an agreement less dignified and less advantageous to Britain, France and Russia, than that originally proposed by the Berlin statesmen. Again, fresh impetus was given to the bad feeling existing between the two groups in Europe.

LESSONS—

(1) FAIR-PLAY.

Having examined these two international questions, we can draw certain conclusions, which may give us a fairer insight into the causes of the war, and consequently certain guiding principles for the removal of such causes in the future. Firstly, I have produced sufficient evidence to show that, whoever was guilty of the particular action which started the present war, Germany had very definite instances of aggressive treatment by other Powers (Great Britain included), to which she could point as proof of her contention that she was the victim of a European conspiracy, and that her neighbours were striving in unison to check her economic and colonial expansion. From this we get the first ideal that should inspire us in our after-war policy. Fair-play, which we delight to call a typically British virtue, must be accorded to every nation; or, to change the phrase, all nations must be given equality of opportunity for legitimate development. When we have secured an international system based on this broad ground, then, and then only, shall we be able with honesty and sincerity to accuse our neighbours of aggressive conduct.

(2) NATIONAL IGNORANCE OF FOREIGN POLICY.

The next point which I would emphasise is one which explains much of the friction with which I have dealt above, and a point, too, which follows as the necessary corollary from my first conclusion. It is a means to that end; as well as an end in itself. We have seen how nearly Europe was involved in war over the question of Morocco. France and Germany were the actual disputants, but it was inevitable that, had war broken out beween them, England would have been drawn in. And yet the English people (the so-called "de facto rulers" of England) knew very little indeed of the matter until the crisis was past. Moreover, what small knowledge of the case they had was entirely subordinated in the minds of the majority to the internal politics of the moment. If I was to tell any one of the soldiers in this camp that we had been, a few years ago, on the verge of being drawn into a war, similar in magnitude to the present one, on the question of the partition of Morocco (a partition in which his own country was to have had no share), I am confident that the soldier would disbelieve me. Yet such is actual fact. And I doubt not that that soldier would argue with me intelligently on the rights and wrongs of the National Insurance Act or the Abolition of the House of Lords. In other words, the Foreign Policy of this country, on which depends the manner of life of every Englishman, lies in the hands of a limited group, who hand on, one to another, traditions of secrecy. How often were Foreign Politics discussed in Parliament prior to this war? At the best the Secretary of Foreign Affairs made an occasional statement of vague generalities, carefully omitting particulars such as our alliances with other Powers; or an inquisitive private member asked a question about the trivial details of Consular administration. What would have been the fate of a candidate who at election time addressed his supporters on the Diplomacy of the Government? I know that his audience would have melted away, and attached themselves to his rival, who, wise in his generation, would have been volleying and thundering on some such topic as Marconi shares. Yet on our Foreign Policy rests the fate of the Empire, and of every individual member thereof.

(3) DEMOCRATIC CONTROL.

The remedy lies in allowing the nation to consider International matters. I would have a committee of the House of Commons on Foreign Relations, which could discuss the actions of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and register votes on matters of Foreign Policy, with the same freedom and publicity as any member of Parliament can criticise and vote on the financial engagements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If I am told that secrecy is essential to a successful Foreign Policy, I answer that secrecy is only

essential to that type of Foreign Policy which enters into a definite agreement regarding Morocco and disregards that agreement as soon as is convenient. Such an arrangement (I mean a Committee of the House of Commons on Foreign Relations) would remove the national apathy regarding our diplomacy, and would arouse in the minds of the people of England a sense of their responsibilities in this direction. As for the objection that the people of England are not sufficiently educated to make proper use of such responsibility, I remind my objectors that it is less than a century ago that the workmen of agricultural England were supposed to be incapable of thinking and voting sanely on questions of domestic policy. Briefly, then, my second contention is the necessity for a more democratised control of Foreign Policy.[1]

(4) THE DANGER OF IGNORANT JINGOISM.

One more lesson can be drawn from our two examples of British Foreign Policy, and that lesson will provide the answer to the oft-repeated objection to Democratic Control of International Affairs. It is said that when a diplomatic crisis becomes known to the public, their influence is always on the side of war. Apart from the answer that the present war will, for generations to come, be a wholesome reminder to the peoples of Europe, I can urge a far more effective counter-policy. Were the democratisation of foreign policy to be carried out on the lines which I have indicated, these crises would not occur in the same manner which they do at present. I am not maintaining that popular control will immediately bring about concord and harmony between the nations (although it is obvious that the abolition of secret clauses to published treaties will involve a great step in that direction); I am simply showing that if tension shall chance to exist in Europe, the general public will have been able to follow up every circumstance leading to such tension; and will have had, through their representatives, opportunity of directing those circumstances. In the past the Governments of Great Britain have never admitted the House of Commons into their councils until nearly all chance of peaceful negotiation has passed, and war has been imminent. In a society where every man can study the course of his country's foreign policy, he will be able to form his own opinion as to the probable course of events which will follow any particular line of action. At any rate, the leaders of contemporary thought will have a fair chance of directing opinion, by speeches and writings, before it becomes too late. What happens at present? With few preliminaries the man in the street learns that a diplomatic crisis has arisen, which may involve England in war. He learns suddenly of alliances and agreements of which he was previously totally ignorant. There is no profit to be gained

[1]. See books and pamphlets, published by the Union of Democratic Control, for the proper presentation of this contention.

now by questioning the justifiability of these alliances. A natural desire, born of ordinary business habits and social practice, makes an Englishman anxious that his country should meet her obligations. If he does give thought to the advisability of our treaties, he knows that it is too late now to alter them. Then if he still hesitates he is overweighed by the influence of the newspapers—particularly those jingoistic journals which have the widest circulation. They give the battle-cry: Our national honour is at stake. Officially inspired they give space only to arguments and speeches in favour of high-handed conduct. The public take their cue from the newspapers and then, no doubt, democracy is in favour of war. But he who has followed my argument knows that this is not the true expression of democracy, but a voice based on impotence and ignorance. In the case of the Eastern Question, which I have outlined above, the jingoes and the jingoistic newspapers nearly involved this country in war, and actually succeeded in fermenting a vast amount of bad feeling between England and Germany, which is one of the causes of the present war. Whereas, if the Parliament and the people had known from the beginning the circumstances of the case, and if the leaders of opinion had been free to point out the arguments for both sides, I am convinced that the position arrived at by the Government just prior to the war would have been reached in a quicker and more dignified fashion, without any friction between England and Germany. This, then, is the third point—the immense danger of unbridled jingoism free to work among an uninstructed public.

APPLICATION OF THE LESSONS.

I have now touched upon some few of the causes of the war; bringing as evidence of German contentions two concrete instances, from which I have drawn three lessons, closely connected with one another: the need for fair-play in international relations; the harm done to the cause of peace by jingoism, and the necessity for democratic control of foreign policy. These principles, I have contended, should be the basis of the settlement after the war, the controlling ideas in the minds of those responsible for the concluding of the peace terms. The exact terms it is impossible to suggest at present; all that I can do is to outline in very general terms the application of these principles to the settlement. I can best do so by examining the type of peace which cannot fail to accentuate those very causes of war which we set out to destroy.

THE "CRUSHING" OF GERMANY.

(1) ANNEXATION.

We hear only too often statements by prominent men in this country to the effect that it is our intention to "crush" Germany and Austria by means of the war. Various methods of doing

so have been suggested. Firstly, there is annexation, a question which involves extra-European territory as well as that on the Continent. If Alsace-Lorraine wishes to return to France, no one can object, for Alsace-Lorraine is not part of Germany. Similarly we ought to establish in Poland that form of autonomous Government most acceptable to the Poles, every State concerned—Germany and Austria included—co-operating heartily and with equal voice in the matter. This is only the application of the principle of fair-play. But apart from these changes, there is a certain element in England which calls aloud for further annexation of territory, and talks of the dismemberment of Germany and Austria. Such utterance, however irresponsible its origin, does incalculable harm to our cause, and tends without a doubt to lengthen the war. Let us look at the Franco-Prussian War, the German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Prussia thought then, as our extremists think to-day, that the thorough humiliation of a fallen enemy would render that enemy incapable of further struggle. We know how different was the case, and how the desire for revenge kept alive in France for over forty years that hatred of Germany which is one of the causes of the present conflict. (We must also note here the very decided impetus given to the Prussian militaristic spirit by their annexation). If France, with her decreasing population and her frequent political discord, could not rest subdued under her loss, are we to imagine that Germany, united by the desire for revenge, with her persevering and ever-growing people, will remain peaceful for many years after, let us say, the loss of her Rhine Provinces? For God's sake let us see that our loved ones have not died in vain!

In earlier times the Roman Army were entrapped by enemies, who hesitated as to what course to pursue when they had their bitter foe totally at their mercy. A wise elder sent them alternative counsel. "Either kill them all," he said, "or let them all go." Nowadays, even supposing we had Germany in our power, their vast population makes extermination ridiculous. There is still only one alternative—"Let them all go," that is to say, we must treat them so fairly that they will be content to live in concord for the future, nursing no implacable desire for revenge. Germany and Austria must meet us, after this war, however it ends, on equal terms at the peace conference. I confess that I see no alternative to the transference of part at least of their African colonies to the South African Union, but I suggest compensation elsewhere—in the undeveloped regions of Asia, referred to above.

(2) INDEMNITY.

The second method suggested for "crushing" Germany is the imposition of an indemnity. This idea cannot be treated seriously.

In the first place it is evident that, after paying their shares in the reconstruction of Belgium and Servia, the Central Powers, in common with the Allies, will have enough to do for years to come in paying for the war. Any financier will assure us, too, that the imposition of an indemnity will react on all the other nations of Europe.[1] Again, the imposition of an indemnity is open to the same objections as are all forms of punishing an enemy: it is a motive to revenge, as well as an action to a conquered antagonist unworthy of any nation professing to fight for liberty.

Before I proceed to the last method put forward for the "crushing" of Germany, I wish to meet the usual objection to the course which I have propounded. Germany, I am told, must be made to pay for her outrages—murder of civilians, brutality to prisoners, submarine warfare and so on throughout the long list, which we all regard with equal detestation and horror. I answer that the failure of their beliefs, the realization of the truth about their cause, for which they have fought with heroic purpose, will be enough payment for the people of Germany. Any indemnity or annexation will have its maximum effect on the people, who are as innocent of the giving of orders for these outrages as you or I are innocent of any acts by our Government, many of which are unknown to us. The way to punish those responsible for German conduct during the war is to prove by our moderation in victory the falseness of enemy allegations against us, and by our fairness to unite the people of Germany, not by the spirit of revenge, but by the desire for freedom from their rulers, who led them into the war, and by the determination to rid themselves of their autocratic governors. In this way we shall indirectly punish the guilty, and induce our former enemies to unite with us in the prevention of further war.

(3) ECONOMIC WAR AFTER THE WAR.

We must now consider the last and most popular course suggested for the "crushing" of Germany. It is the policy of "economic war after the war," and it has behind it the authority of the British Government.

In June, 1916, representatives of the Allied Governments met in Paris for an economic conference, with the object of countering preparations which they allege that Germany is making for an economic domination of the trade world after peace is declared. To this end our Government has published a list of "Recommenda-

[1]. See the "Great Illusion," Part I., by Mr. Norman Angell.

tions"[1] made by this conference for concerted action in trade matters by the Allies during, immediately after, and permanently after the war. These recommendations embody those very principles against which they profess to be directed, principles which are denounced by the Conference as "a grave peril" and as the imposition "of an intolerable yoke." In other words, on the plea (which is absolutely unjustifiable, and rests entirely on the irresponsible talk of jingoistic German newspapers) that Germany initiated preparations for an "economic war after the war," England is to be committed, without her people's consent, to that very type of aggression which we set out to defeat. The "War to End Wars" is to be the cause of a new war directed against the trade and the economic opportunities and the commercial life, not of an autocratic despotism, but of seventy million misguided people. Such an economic war, in the opinion of unprejudiced neutrals and of the lovers of freedom in all countries, will inevitably result in a repetition of the present struggle, in which England will have to fight, not an autocratic system, but a people with a just cause behind them and their very existence at stake. To such a war there can be but one conclusion, the conclusion reached when Napoleon challenged not the armies of kings and emperors but the spirit of an oppressed people. In evidence of my contention we have only to look at the publication in Germany of those Paris Resolutions. The Socialist party, which by now, in the opinion of shrewd observers, might have thrown off its rulers as Russia has done, has closed its ranks, and found itself more in harmony with the militaristic element than it had previously been throughout the whole war. The Allies played into the hands of the Prussian statesmen, who had thrown to them substantial proof in support of their accusation that not Germany but France and England were the aggressors, and that it was Germany who was fighting to preserve her economic liberties against a militaristic combination. To those who, caring nothing for freedom and morality or for the object with which Great Britain justified her entry into the struggle, demand that the economic oppression shall be so rigorous as to make Germany permanently impotent, I answer that such an idea is impossible. However hopeless the cause of a people united by oppression may appear, given sufficient justification (as our politicians propose to give them), they will eventually throw off "the intolerable yoke" imposed upon them. Any measures such as those recommended by the Allied Conference, and destined to weaken our enemies, will inevitably weaken our alliance as well; and, by their impartial operation among friends and foes alike, cannot fail to break up the Entente Alliance as at present constituted. To realize the truth of this statement we must

[1] See "Economic War After the War," by G. Lowes-Dickinson (U.D.C.), for the text of the Recommendations and a criticism.

examine another objection to the "economic war after the war," which I bring forward to convince those who are willing to risk another war in view of the immediate profits which they fancy will accrue to England from the proposed commercial boycott of Germany.

ECONOMICALLY FUTILE.

Not only will England and her Allies secure no profits to themselves by imposing such a boycott, but they will, I unhesitatingly affirm, bring upon the workers of their countries sufficient loss to neutralise every improvement in the social and industrial life of the poorer classes which has been made during the last century. When peace is declared we shall have a vast number of factors leading to impoverishment without adding to them. Unemployment, rise in the cost of living and consequent decline of wages, depreciation of money values and a hundred other difficulties are bound to follow in the wake of war. It is proposed to add to these by removing the means of support of the great number of working men whose labours contributed to and whose livelihood depended on our former export trade to Germany; the value of which (to quote facts as they affect Great Britain alone) totalled 111 millions sterling in 1913, and which had during the previous ten years more than doubled itself. Owing to the widespread need for retrenchment after the war no other country will be able to increase her imports from Britain so as to take the place of the great export total from this country. Again, in 1913 our imports from Germany amounted to the value of 108 millions, and were increasing on the same scale as the exports. These imports are necessary to the carrying on of our industrial life. If we no longer buy from Germany we must buy elsewhere. It is suggested by the advocates of the economic war that our Allies will provide the markets. I do not hold that this will always be untrue, but I urge two considerations: Firstly, that these markets cannot be organised until very many years after the war, during which period industrial depression will have ruined Great Britain and her Allies; secondly, that no other country could sell goods so well made and so cheap as did Germany before the war; and that consequently, just when poverty and distress will be most rampant in England, we shall be forced to pay very increased prices for our necessary imports from abroad.

Similar considerations can be urged in all the Allied countries. I have indicated in barest outline two lines on which it may be proved how futile, from the point of view of gain to the Entente belligerents, is the proposed economic war. The crux of the whole question lies in the economic interdependence of trade in the modern world. To those who would study the matter in all its

bearings, I can only recommend in admiring deference, Mr. Norman Angell's "Great Illusion"—the classic of the subject.[1] I have merely endeavoured to show that the proposed trade war with Germany after this war is economically unsound, in addition to being morally wrong, and as fatal to all hopes of future peace as are those other suggested plans for the "crushing" of Germany.

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SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS.

My conclusions from the foregoing arguments may be briefly summarised. Germany was to blame for the actual outbreak of the war; the causes of which cannot be laid to the door of any one nation, but which are shared by the oligarchic Governments of all the Powers of Europe. To remove those causes is the object of the war. A peace which will do so must be founded on fair play—no nation being penalised as the criminal by annexations, imposition of indemnity, or economic isolation, all of which are both morally wrong and practically useless. Further, democratic control of Foreign Policy must be established, as a means towards that international unity which we set out to secure. Only thus, I maintain, can we hope to prevent another war in Europe, as terrible as the present one.

OUR PRINCIPLES IN ACTION.

One often hears such conclusions styled as idealistic. So they are, perhaps, but we must remember that the ideals of to-day are the basic principles of to-morrow. Moreover, there is abundant evidence that these ideals are capable of realisation at no very distant date. The Russian Revolution is an undoubted step toward the arrangement of peace terms on a statesmanlike and moderate basis; while America has entered the war with a noble declaration embodying the principles I am supporting. I know that in France and Germany, too, the Socialistic elements are striving toward the same ends. Great Britain has, through her people, borne a glorious share in the war; and she has paraded her love of liberty and her moral purpose as no other of her Allies has done. Great Britain must not be the drag on the wheel of progress, nor the cause of the futile prolongation of the war. But she will be a drag if her politicians are allowed a free hand; if her people are given no say in the question of the settlement. We have proof of this in those Paris Resolutions alone. There are some who declare that to-day, if Great Britain would move, peace might

[1]. Heinemann, 2s. 6d.

be arranged. On this point I am not convinced, but I plead with all intensity that a fair hearing may be given to those who hold such opinions, and that they may be allowed to raise their voices in the great cause which they are so courageously espousing. Still more do I insist that our country must fight for a permanent peace. Just as I, amid many thousands of others, took up arms with the idea that this—a permanent peace—was our goal, so now I am praying that I may not be lead into bearing a hand, however insignificant, in prolonging the struggle, and rendering future war inevitable. To decide whether we are doing so or not, each one of us must look to his own conscience, not waiting on the words of any man, but considering all the factors impartially. When any soldier is satisfied in his own mind that Great Britain is fighting a war which is neither a war of defence nor yet a "war to end war," he will then be playing the part of a true patriot to resign any position in the Army which he accepted voluntarily. As long as he is convinced that a vigorous prosecution of the struggle is necessary for the establishment of a just peace and a peace which will be lasting, then his duty is to fight with all his strength, giving freely of his services.

THE FUTURE.

Many of us are in doubt to-day. For my own part, as soon as my conscience and my reason tell me that we are no longer true to the ideals of our cause, I trust that I shall have the strength to follow the harder path—the infinitely harder path—and resign my humble position in this Army. We must watch events fairly, and take counsel with our hearts. The issue is grave, and affects every one of us, the youngest most of all. "We must prepare for the coming hour," said Disraeli in a notable passage. "The claims of the future are represented by suffering millions, and the Youth of a Nation are the Trustees of Posterity." His words never rang truer than to-day. They are well supplemented by a passage from a modern lover of liberty:—

> "But I hope; I hope because of the young. And to them I now turn. To you, young men, it has been given by a tragic fate to see with your eyes and hear with your ears what war really is. Old men made it, but you must wage it—with what courage, with what generosity, with what sacrifice of what hopes, they best know who best know you. If you return from this ordeal, remember what it has been. Do not listen to the shouts of victory, do not snuff the incense of applause; but keep your inner vision fixed on the facts you have faced. You have seen battleships, bayonets and guns, and you know them for what they are, forms of evil thought. Think other thoughts, love other loves, youth of England and of the

world! You have been through hell and purgatory. Climb now the rocky stair that leads to the sacred mount. The guide of tradition leaves you here. Guide now yourselves and us. Believe in the future, for none but you can. Believe in the impossible, for it waits the help of your hands to become the inevitable. Of all the best hopes of civilisation and mankind, the old, the disillusioned, the gross, the practitioners of the world are the foes. Be you the friends! Take up the thought and give it shape in act! You can, and you alone. It is for that you have suffered. It is for that you have gained vision. And in your ears for your inspiration, rings the great sentence of the poet:—

> 'Libero, dritto e sano e lo tuo arbitrio,
> E fallo fôra non fare a suo senno,
> Per ch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio.'

(Free, right and whole is thy will, and it would be error not to act at its bidding. Wherefore I crown and mitre thee Lord over thyself.)"[1]

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[1]. "After the War," by Mr. Lowes Dickinson.

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